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LETTER DATED 18 AUGUST 1998 FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ADDRESSED TO THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

On behalf of the members of the Security Council, I am replying to your letter of 11 August 1998 to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/766, annex).

The members of the Security Council take note with concern that Iraq's decision to suspend cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) prevents IAEA from carrying out the full range of its activities, as mandated under the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 687 (1991), which constitute the governing standard for Iraqi compliance.

The members of the Security Council, as their initial reaction, consider that Iraq's announcement is totally unacceptable and contravenes the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Secretary-General and the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq on 23 February 1998. The members of the Council note with regret that the announcement was made after a period of improved cooperation and achievement of some tangible results since the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding.

The members of the Security Council also take note with concern of your assessment that current circumstances result in a significantly reduced level of assurance than would be provided through the full implementation of the ongoing monitoring and verification (OMV) plan.

The members of the Security Council reiterate their full support for IAEA and UNSCOM in the full implementation of their mandates. Iraq is obliged under the relevant Security Council resolutions to provide IAEA and UNSCOM with the cooperation necessary for them to undertake their activities, including inspections. You should continue to report to the Council on all occasions that you deem necessary.

The members of the Security Council also express their support for the continuing efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy. The members of the Council emphasize the need for an early resumption of dialogue between IAEA and Iraq and will be ready to respond favourably to future progress made in the disarmament process.

(Signed) Danilo TÜRK
President of the Security Council